

ACSI-IU

21 February 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL ALVA R. FITCH

SUBJECT: Recommendations of the Killian Board (U)

The four recommendations in the report of the President's Board, even if carried out fully, would not have much impact on the problem raised in the body of the report. These must of course be commented upon, but such a narrow response would necessarily be as weak as the recommendations are.

It is suggested, therefore, that the response should be in the spirit of the report, which is embodied in these phrases: "pull together all of the pertinent information for a meaningful appraisal," and "a sensitive, continuing, and discriminating assessment." The report nowhere suggests that the White House be flooded with raw or poorly digested reports (except by implication in the somewhat contradictory recommendation for a greater sense of urgency).

Without the setting up of new machinery, there are two places where information is assembled and appraised in the fields implied by the examples cited in the report: The Watch Committee, for Communist actions (the Berlin wall); and the office (in ONE) compiling the Weekly Survey of Cold War Crisis Situations, for crisis situations outside the bloc (the Syrian coup). Both agencies already have access to all information received, and both rely quite directly upon the same desk analysts in the agencies.

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Assignment of responsibility for both fields (Communist and Free World) to the Watch Committee would divert that committee from its important mission to provide warning of hostile action or related developments by the Sine-Soviet bloc (DCID No. 1/5). Furthermore, the committee appears to have all it can handle reasonably.

The Cold War Crisis group appears to be better able to meet the requirement for "meaningful appraisal" of crisis situations not related directly or immediately to the Sine-Soviet threat. It is located with the estimative group which already deals with the crisis subjects to be covered in NIE's and with SNIE's when occasion warrants.

Estimates Office comments that if the Cold War Crisis group is given further responsibility, its mission should be clarified. Estimates Office goes on to say that "at present the group's mission has largely been reduced to reacting to current developments, and the report isn't much better than a wrap-up of weekly developments in areas in which some type of crisis is expected or has occurred. The greatest potential of this group is early warning of an impending crisis." Western Division makes a similar suggestion, with the additional thought that the group could guide collection, possibly through a list of indicators in the "crisis" field. Collection Division, without naming the Cold War group, suggests that the problem be met through an interagency all-source committee with "its mission the analysis of the situation throughout the world, particularly with respect to potential crisis areas, on a 'common sense' basis."

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Informally, it has been indicated that CIA -- at least on the lower levels -- would resist expansion and development of the Cold War Survey activity. However, it would appear desirable to expand the scope of Cold War Crisis situation reports so as to cover periodically all crisis situations not directly or immediately related to the Sino-Soviet threat. Thus there would be a formalized arrangement and a specific assignment of responsibility for continuing assessment and periodic reporting on all situations which might require the United States to take action.

In addition to the Watch Committee and the Cold War Crisis group, there are other inter-agency committees, such as the Economic Intelligence Committee, the Joint Atomic Energy Intelligence Committee, and the Guided Missiles and Astronautic Intelligence Committee, which assess and report on developments in specialized fields, thus providing an additional degree of assurance of comprehensive coverage of developments of intelligence interest.

In reading the Board's first recommendation, most of those consulted were initially incensed by the phrase "sense of urgency," some even feeling that there is already too much of a sense of urgency, too much pressure, and too many alerts. The examples given -- on the wall and the coup -- also aroused an urge to rebuttal, particularly among CIA personnel. Mr. Causey said he expects Mr. Sheldon or Mr. Kent to approach you with the suggestion that a rebuttal of the report's accusations be included in the USIB response.

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On closer examination, however, the intent of the paragraph can be considered to be (a) that field and headquarters agencies might be given a higher priority for the handling of "crisis" reports and (b) that the examples, whether correctly chosen or not, represent conditions which do exist, that is, delayed handling of some reports related to "crises" and the failure to disseminate some reports, particularly in operational agencies or compartments. This interpretation is the basis for the proposed comment on the first recommendation.

The second recommendation requires no comment here, beyond reporting that State requires the following periodic reporting:

a. Weeks.

b. Political-economic assessment, semiannually -- or oftener as determined by the Department and responsive to the situation.

c. Sino-Soviet Bloc Political and Economic Relations, semiannually.

Other reports are spontaneous or in response to requests or guidance by State or CIA.

No comment seems needed here on No. 3, as it would merely repeat the comments on this recommendation in the draft letter.

Reference the fourth recommendation, the existing arrangements and procedures for getting information from the community to the White House seem to be adequate. The channels now operating appear to be:

(a) DCI or DDCI calls a member of the White House staff (Gen Clifton, Gen Taylor, Mr. Rudy, Mr. Kayser).

(b) CIA Watch Office to White House duty desk (manned 24 hours a day

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in White House International Situation Room by three CIA representatives).

(NIC uses this channel.)

(c) CIA daily briefing of White House staff.

At this distance, it would seem impolitic for Mr. McGone to decline to "consult with appropriate White House officials" about these arrangements. He certainly will want to "consult" them about getting copies of reports furnished to the White House by other sources -- presumably by non-intelligence sources, since he (or his duty officer) is the community's normal channel.

A proposed draft response for signature of the DCI is at Tab "A".

An accompanying paper is a memorandum on the subject from the Director, NIC. The memorandum, addressed but not sent to the Executive Secretary, USIB, was provided us for consideration in connection with your committee's work. The first paragraph, saying the Watch Committee and NIC did not consider the Syria-QAR affair to be strictly within their mission, supports the thesis that consideration of "crisis situations" should be specifically assigned. The remainder of the memorandum is self-explanatory as defense against the criticisms in the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board's memorandum.

1 Incl
Tab "A"

IRA B. RICHARDS, JR.
Colonel, GS
Chief, Eurasian Division